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REACTION CANADA?

Hellyer plays mystery game

What is Paul Hellyer up to with his protest group Action Canada? Is it a legitimate sounding board for voters' discontent, or is it to be the embryo of a new rightwing political party?

Mr. Hellyer does little to clear up the confusion when he admits he is holding discussions with the apostles of Social Credit about the leadership of that movement, and says he has also been invited to run for the leadership of the Conservative party when Robert Stanfield chooses to quit.

Despite Mr. Hellyer's disclaimers of personal ambition, the former Liberal cabinet minister sounds more and more like a political cleric preaching for a call.

If he seeks to convert Action Canada into an Eastern wing of Social Credit, or sees it as a springboard to the Tory leadership, he should come out and say so. And if he doesn't, he should disavow political attachment entirely.

The discontented electors whose support he solicits have a right to know what he's up to before they part with their money to join his mysterious crusade.

Hanoi baits the hook

The new North Vietnamese offer for the release of American prisoners of war is likely, or is at least designed, to drive a wedge between the U.S. and South Vietnam, and possibly between President Nixon and the American public.

Hanoi is prepared to release the prisoners, but it wants American troops pulled out faster. It also seeks the overthrow of the Saigon regime and its replacement by a coalition, the simultaneous release of thousands of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese prisoners in the South, and it reserves the right to claim compensation for the destruction wrought in both Vietnams by U.S. military action.

The North Vietnamese are thus acting as if they have already won the war-as in a sense they have. The U.S. public at least is determined to get out of Vietnam and get its prisoners out of North Vietnam.

Clearly, Saigon will find the conditions unacceptable. To release thousands of enemy soldiers would be unthinkable in a country barely able to defend itself against a determined adversary.

Festival for Ottawa

Festival Canada 1971 is an ambitious attempt by the National Arts Centre to put Ottawa on the festive map, perhaps eventually to achieve the international artistic status of Edinburgh, Bath or Aldeburgh.

Of all the events planned for the month of July, perhaps the most noteworthy is the new production of Mozart's opera The Marriage of Figaro. now being put together for next Tuesday's opening and four subsequent performances.

With Mario Bernardi conducting the National Arts Centre Orchestra and an all-Canadian cast of singers who have already made their musical reputations in various parts of the world, it promises to demonstrate that Canada can produce festival material of a high calibre from its own home-grown resources.

It's to be hoped the centre will continue a policy of originating its own productions, rather than simply pinning a "Festival" label on events which would normally be seen within its precincts any-





EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Uttawa: lovely and ugly

By Christopher Young Unlike some people who express their opinions on this page, I like the first of July. Nor do I care much what we call it.

The main thing is that we have one day a year to celebrate our country. It is a legitimate anniversary, the date on which the Canadian Confederation was born. It means a lot more to me, and I'm sure to most Canadians, than many other holidays we celebrate—notably Victoria Day (long since forgotten in Britain), the August civic holiday, La-

bor Day, and Thanksgiving. Ottawa is a focus of the July 1 celebrations and nowadays spruces up quite fetchingly for the occasion. Why shouldn't we seize a chance like this to be gay when the city is so green, when the sunshine feels so warm, when even the polluted rivers look so cool.

But perhaps the holiday weekend is a time when Ottawa might look at itself and consider how it has progressed since last birthday towards the goal of making itself a more beautiful, a more congenial, a more inspiring capital for all Canadians.

People places

A lot of good things have happened since last July 1;

 The Sparks Street Mall is more lively, busy and colorful than ever, and is creeping westward to Place de Ville.

 The National Capital Commission has been doing bright, new people-minded things. Skating on the Rideau Canal in winter, biking on carless driveways on summer Sundays, bicycle paths under construction, garden plots on unused land, a new speaker's corner-all courtesy of the NCC.

• Progress has been made difficult, controversial and sometimes bitter-on the vital problem of improving French teaching in our

schools. The effects will begin to trickle into our children's minds next fall, and nothing could be more relevant to the meaning of our national holiday.

 And the National Arts Centre launched a summer festival, modest in scope this year but perhaps the beginning of something important and rewarding.

Ruined rivers

But a birthday balance-sheet requires in honesty some mention of our failures, too easily overlooked in the hazy, lazy days when the mind turns away from the city towards holiday travel or backyard barbe-

Consider at least two costly examples of how we have made our local environment more hostile instead of more lovely in the past year. One is the ruin of our swimming beaches through the careless disposition of human filth. The other is the scarring of our skyline by a large, expensive, ugly building erected at public expense.

Ottawa has been blessed with three fine waterways—a wide, majestic river flowing out of the north to the St. Lawrence; a pretty, pastoral stream winding out of the south to Rideau Falls; and a pleasant, man-made canal. All are now fouled with excrement and garbage, unfit to drink, swim in, or pass the nostrils close to.

Not a natural beach in Ottawa or Hull is open for swimming this summer, and all because the public authorities responsible-civic, municipal, provincial and federal-did not act in time though often warned. It is a sacrilege on nature and an affront to man.

Even the much-praised NCC booted this problem. It expelled private cottagers from its holdings in Gatineau Park with the worthy objectives of serving a wider public, but

it put little of value in their place. At Meach Lake a couple of handkerchief-sized beaches are circumscribed with more "don'ts" than "dos". At Kingsmere, nothing positive has developed, while cottages are boarded up, lawns gone to seed, and cottage lots enclosed with barbed wire to keep the public off public land. Meanwhile hundreds are turned away from the over-

crowded beach at Lac Philippe. As for that scarred skyline, it is a sorry comment on the esthetic taste of departmental committees. With every day that passes it becomes more obvious that the giant \$27 million Canadian Forces Headquarters is going to stand astride the Rideau Canal for generations as a monument to the Age of Uglies.

Gruesome growth

When one thinks of the trouble and expense incurred by the architects of the National Arts Centreand it is a good building—to make sure that it would not dominate the skyline at the expense of Parliament Hill, the mind flounders in an attempt to understand the decisionmaking process that would allow this monstrous new growth upon the landscape.

Take a look some time from the eastern side of the canal, if you haven't done so recently, and you will see how good and bad contemporary architecture can be. The new Bell Canada tower-which after all is just another functional office building like the Defence HQ-soars cleanly and gracefully into the sky: while the Defence building squats between the bridges like a threat from some cheap science fiction

So despite the skating rink and the bike paths, the Mall and the festival: it's not all congratulations this birthday. Not until we stop fouling our own nest with liquid slime and joyless concrete.

READER'S VIEWS

Drop two-man ward system, alderman asks

Editor, Citizen: I'd like to alert Ottawa voters to one serious mistake that was made when city council decided to reduce its size from 27 to 17. That was the decision to create six super-wards with two aldermen apiece, rather than 12 one-man wards. That vote will be reconsidered at Monday night's meeting, and I hope citizens will urge their representatives to change their minds.

The main arguments for two-man wards are that citizens will be able to reach one alderman if the other fellow is out of town; that if one alderman isn't effective, there's a chance the other one will be; and that aldermen now on council feel more comfortable with two-man system.

I don't think the preferences of the present council should override what's best for the city. From my own experience, there's no reason why an alderman can't get someone else to handle his calls when he's away. As for the risk of electing a dud-that's in the hands of the voters.

To my mind, the defects of the super-ward system far outweigh the benefits. Local government is meant to be close to the peoplebut how can it be when the average ward has 50,000 people, almost as many as the average provincial riding? Aldermen could keep in touch with their people if they shared duties with their colleagues; but experience in Ottawa shows that two aldermen who must compete for re-election don't often co-operate that

When council's size is reduced, voters should be able to see clearly how their representatives carry out their duties. Here again, experience has shown that twoman wards tend to diffuse responsibility and allow aldermen to pass the buck.

The two-man system is an historic curiosity that ought to be forgotten. If it was really so effective, why is it that elections to the federal and provincial legislatures are universally based on one man per riding?

MICHAEL CASSIDY Wellington Ward

Ottawa.

Poor solution

Editor, Citizen: Last year I wrote about the folly of city council's unsuccessful attempts at reducing its size and changing its representative format. Now I find myself critical of the scheme that the council finally arrived at last week.

I should have suggested at the time that city council pass on the job to an impartial board of review since the matter dealt so closely with the councillors' personal interests (especially with the recent increase in pay).

size of council but find this solution of six wards with two aldermen each the worst of all possible solutions-and, with the extra alderman being sent to regional council, a form of blackmail. I hope the regional people refuse the scheme and send it back to be discussed properly.

two-aldermen-perward representation is terrible and leaves room for the worst kind of buck-passing and featherbedding. The decrease in the number of wards will lead to the deterioration of the neighborhoods . . . not to mention what will happen when the boundaries are redrawn.

I favor the scheme of 11 wards with one alderman each. But my mind isn't set. would like to see a citywide referendum on the matter in the early fall so that the entire population can participate in this important decision and still get the change into operation by the next civic election.

CHRIS BRADSHAW Ottawa.

Quit Quebec?

Editor, Citizen: Isn't it about time the federal government told Quebec to quit horsin' around? It should prove most interesting to note the reaction of the Quebec government if it were informed by Mr. Trudeau that Canada was contemplating seceding from Quebec, and would, of course, be taking over the Gaspe Peninsula to consolidate Canada's Atlantic seaboard defences.

C. J. STEWART

Let them go

Editor, Citizen: It is obvious that the people of Quebec wish to sever all relationships with the rest of Canada.

Premier Bourassa in rejecting the recommended constitutional changes and receiving support from all parties in the Quebec Legislature for his rejection, obviously carried out the wishes of the Quebec people.

I therefore humbly suggest that the rest of Canada do everything possible to assist Quebec to re-establish herself as a sovereign state.

When this comes about we will no longer be pounded with the B & B problem, all the money now being wasted on expensive ineffective language laboratories, and other two-language costs could be diverted to much more worthy, effective causes.

There would probably be excessive costs at first, by assisting English-speaking Canadians to move from Quebec and returning the French-speaking people to Quebec, but in the long run the savings would be over-

Let's rally around, Canadians, and help out here. If the people of Quebec wish to leave Confederation, good for them. Who are we to stand in their way?

GERALD REIDY

Federal power

Editor, Citizen: I am shocked by the attitude taken by your writers concerning the possible concession by the federal government of the power to disallow. Just because a power is used little does not mean that the power is unimportant, and in this case, the power is ex-I agree with the smaller tremely important.

Canada was created with the federal government intended to be superior, not equal, to the provincial governments. This is confirmed by such powers as that of appointing and removing Lieutenant - Governors by the Dominion government and that of disallowing provincial legislation.

In the early years of this century this power of disallowance was used extensively when British Columbia attempted to restrict the activities of aliens. Later, in the 1920s and 1930s, the power was used a number of times against Alberta's attempts to implement newmonetary theories that would have affected federal monetary policy.

Without a federal power to disallow, there would be no check upon the actions of a provincial legislature. There would be no check upon a provincial government's power to legislate in such a way as to hinder federal policy aimed at benefiting all Canadians.

GEORGE MORGAN Ottawa.

A note to correspondents

The Citizen publishes only signed correspondence. No pseudonyms are permitted. Writers are requested to provide their address and telephone number to facilitate checking for authenticity and accuracy. These details will not be published. All letters are subject to editing for length, general interest and good taste. They should be limited to a maximum of 200 words.

Feiffer

